

Griffiths Memorial Conservation Area

Ten Year Area Management Plan FY2013-2022




Wildlife Division

3/31/14
Date

Griffiths Memorial Conservation Area Management Plan

Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

Darren Thornhill, Fisheries Division

Cody Smith, Forestry Division

Chad Smith, Wildlife Division

Matt Bergfield, Protection Division

NORTHEAST REGION

RCT Chair


Signature

2-25-14
Date

WILDLIFE DIVISION

Unit Chief


Signature

3/6/14
Date

OVERVIEW

Official Area Name: Griffiths Memorial Conservation Area, #7109

Year of Initial Acquisition: 1971

Acreage: 128 acres

County: Macon

Division with Administrative Responsibility: Wildlife

Division with Maintenance Responsibility: Wildlife

Statements of Purpose:

A. Strategic Direction

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) manages Griffiths Memorial Conservation Area (CA) to improve wildlife habitat and increase flora and fauna species diversity.

B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of Griffiths Memorial CA is a woodland/grassland habitat complex that supports all wildlife.

C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

A. Priority Areas: None

B. Natural Area: None

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

A. Species of conservation concern: None observed

B. Caves: None

C. Springs: None

III. Existing Infrastructure

- Two small pond dams on the area are annually inspected and mowed.
- Parking Lot

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

A. Deed restrictions or ownership considerations: None

B. Federal interest: Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.

C. Easements: None

D. Cultural resources findings: No known cultural resources.

E. Hazards and hazardous materials: None observed.

F. Endangered species: None observed.

G. Boundary issues: None.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

The area contains a mix of open grassland, woodland and forested habitats. The open land is rolling hills with gentle slopes and ridge tops. The woodland and forested acres are primarily an oak/hickory mix and contain steeper slopes and associated drainages. The grassland and some of the wooded acres have a variety of invasive species including autumn olive, fescue, and sericea lespedeza. The management priority of the area will be to reduce or eradicate these and other non-native species.

There is currently minimal agriculture activity on Griffiths Memorial CA. Griffiths Memorial CA is surrounded by production agricultural, both row crop and haying/grazing farms, so there is no desire to expand these practices on the area for the long term. Periodic food plots on some open land acres will be utilized to combat invasive species, supplement natural food sources and maintain early successional habitats. The open fields of the area are managed to minimize invasive species and the encroachment of woody vegetation. Current and future management will focus on maintaining the open fields in an early stage of succession primarily by the use of prescribed fire. Various other mechanical and chemical practices will be used for vegetation manipulation.

The woodland resources on Griffiths Memorial CA are dissected into smaller sized parcels. A significant amount of the wooded acreage consists of drainages between open areas. The smaller parcel size coupled with the lower quality supports a management strategy focused on producing high quality wildlife habitat rather than timber production.

Management Objective 1: Maintain a periodic burn schedule on Griffiths Memorial CA to promote early successional habitat.

Strategy 1: Conduct periodic prescribed fires on the open fields and associated woodland acres on the portion of the area west of Crystal Ave.

Management Objective 2: Reduce invasive and undesirable plants on the area.

Strategy 1: Reduce sericea lespedeza, fescue, and other undesirable herbaceous plants through a combination of prescribed fire and herbicide applications.

Strategy 2: Reduce autumn olive and other undesirable woody plants on the area using mechanical treatments and/or herbicide.

Strategy 3: Negotiate with adjacent landowner to install food plots for the purpose of reducing non-native vegetation and supplementing natural food sources for wildlife.

Management Objective 3: Maintain the level of woodlands currently present.

Strategy 1: Use prescribed fire and mechanical methods to reduce woody growth encroachment in grassland areas.

Strategy 2: Use edge feathering to encourage establishment of shrub species and promote wildlife friendly transitional areas along woodland edges.

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Griffiths Memorial CA has one pond (1.5 acres) that is managed for fishing. It provides recreational fishing opportunities for bluegill, largemouth bass, and channel catfish. One fishless pond (0.2 acres) provides habitat for amphibians and reptiles.

There are 0.3 miles of first order stream channels on Griffiths Memorial CA. The riparian corridors are completely forested for both streams throughout their entire lengths on the CA.

Management Objective 1: Maintain self-sustaining largemouth bass and bluegill fisheries in Pond 1 (see map in appendices for pond location).

Strategy 1: Control excessive aquatic macrophytes chemically or biologically to promote efficient foraging by largemouth bass.

Strategy 2: Opportunistically survey pond 1 every 5-10 years and evaluate fish communities beginning in 2017.

Management Objective 2: In Pond 1, maintain a put-grow-and-take fishery for channel catfish.

Strategy 1: Stock Pond 1 with 8- to 10-inch long channel catfish every three years beginning in 2013.

Management Objective 3: In the fishless pond, provide suitable habitat for amphibians and reptiles.

Strategy 1: Maintain current conditions in the fishless pond and do not stock it with fish.

Management Objective 4: Improve long-term stream stability and ecological function on Griffiths Memorial CA according to MDC Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines.

Strategy 1: Maintain the existing minimum 50-foot wide, wooded riparian corridor on all lands bordering the streams.

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Griffiths Memorial CA offers public use opportunities which include hunting, fishing camping, picnicking, and bird watching. Currently the area infrastructure consists of one parking lot. Camping is allowed in and adjacent to the parking lot and by special use permit for groups of 10 or more. Walk-in camping is also allowed except during firearms deer and turkey seasons. Light public use is noted the majority of the year, most likely due to the small size and remote location of the area. Public use noticeably increases during fall firearms deer season and spring firearms turkey season. Pond 1 (1.5 acres) represents the only fishing resource on Griffiths Memorial CA. The pond is located along a well maintained field road within a short walking distance of the parking lot.

Management Objective 1: Maintain the current facilities to MDC maintenance standards.

Strategy 1: Keep area map on bulletin board and regulations posted in parking lot.

Strategy 2: Inspect boundary biannually and repost boundary signs as needed.

Management Objective 2: Provide pond fishing access for the public on Griffiths Memorial CA.

Strategy 1: Ensure field road leading to the dam of Pond 1 are mowed according to area maintenance standards.

VIII. Administrative Considerations

When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other Department priorities as identified in the

annual Department land acquisition priorities may be considered. As noted by the attached area map, the boundary of the area is irregular and the acreage is two separate tracts. Land acquisition that connects the two tracts would be favored by current area management staff.

Management Objective 1: Evaluate land offered for sale adjacent to Griffiths Memorial CA.

Strategy 1: Closely scrutinize adjacent properties offered for sale to ensure it promotes and enhances the purpose of the area and mission of the Department without excessive addition of workload.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

| | FY14 | FY15 | FY16 | FY17 | FY18 | FY19 | FY20 | FY21 | FY22 | FY23 |
|----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Terrestrial Resources Management | | | | | | | | | | |
| Objective 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Strategy 2 | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | |
| Aquatic Resource Management | | | | | | | | | | |
| Objective 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Strategy 2 | | | | X | | | | | | X |
| Objective 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Strategy 1 | X | | | X | | | X | | | X |
| Public Use Management | | | | | | | | | | |
| Objective 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Strategy 2 | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | |

APPENDICES

Area Background

The Missouri Department of Conservation acquired the property in 1971. This 128-acre area contains 95 acres of forest, 32 acres of grassland, and a 1 acre pond. Griffiths Memorial Conservation Area is managed primarily for deer, turkey and small game. Management of the area includes green browse food plots, timber management, and controlled burns to improve wildlife habitat and increase species diversity.

Current Land and Water Types

| Land/Water Types | Acres | % of Area |
|------------------|------------|-------------|
| Forest | 95 | 74 |
| Grassland | 32 | 25 |
| Water | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 128 | 100% |

Public Input Summary:

The draft Griffith Memorial Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period December 1 – December 31, 2013. The Missouri Department of Conservation received no comments during this time period.

References:

Missouri Department of Conservation Atlas Database accessed April 2013.

Personal interviews and correspondence during April 2013 with Missouri Department of Conservation employees; Darren Thornhill, Cody Smith, Matt Bergfield, Chris Decoske.

Missouri Department of Conservation Natural Heritage Database accessed April 2013.

Missouri Department of Conservation Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines 2009.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Map of Cover Types

Figure 1: Area Map

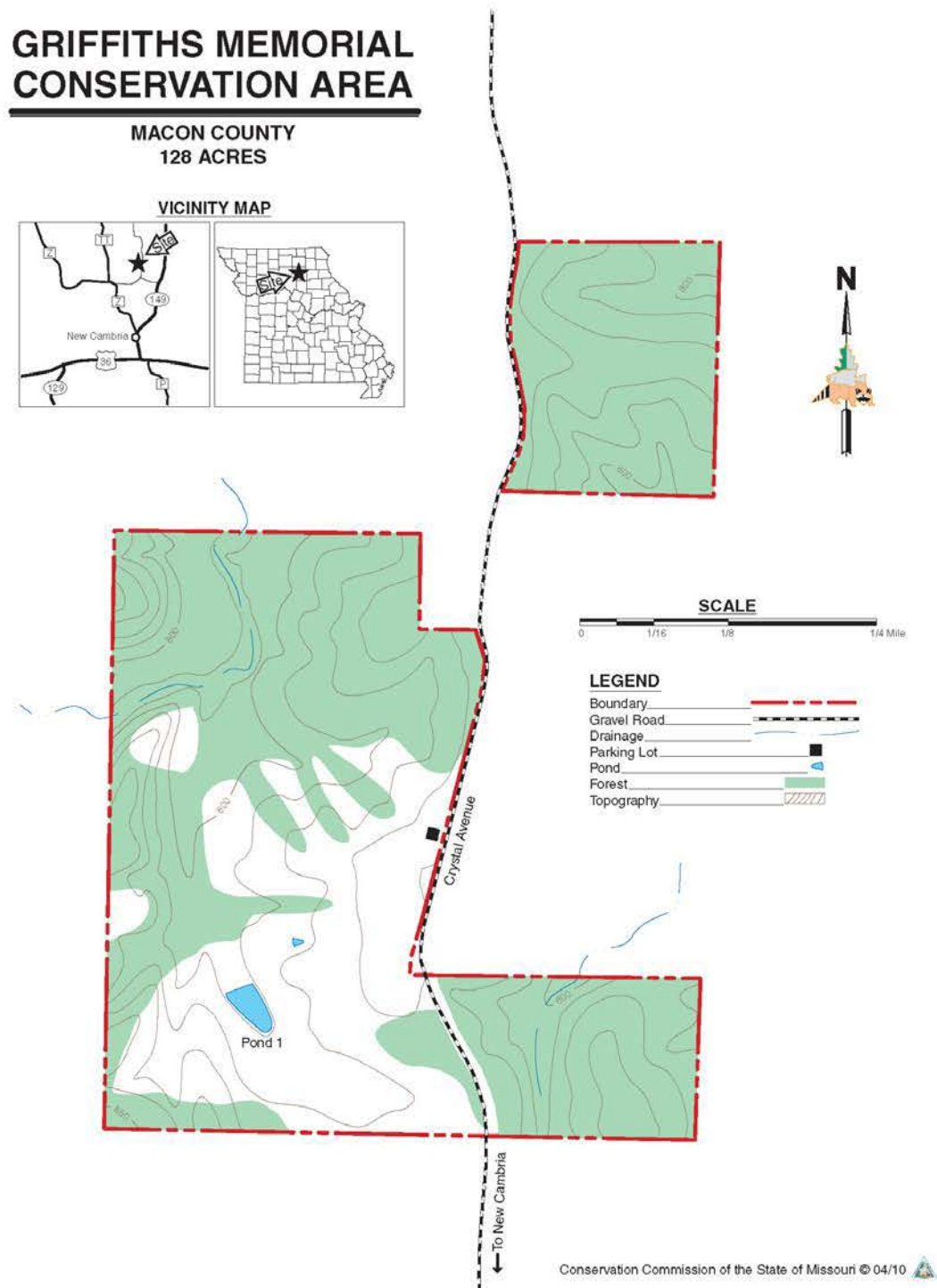


Figure 2: Map of Cover Types

